

'In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. For the LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.'

Zephaniah 3:16-17.

You are warmly invited to meetings arranged by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, to be held, God willing, at  
 NEW LIFE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
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**Spring Conference - April 22nd, 4pm and 7pm**

Afternoon Subject: What are God’s Future Plans for Israel?

Evening Subject: Will the Temple be Rebuilt in Jerusalem?

Speaker: Ian Shaw

**May 27th, 7pm**

Subject: Is there to be a Revival of the Roman Empire?

Speaker: John Douglas

**June 24th, 7pm**

Subject: When will the Antichrist Arise?

Speaker: Paul Toms

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ISSN 1351-4768

# Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

Reformed, Protestant, Puritan, Prophetical, Expository, Doctrinal

Volume 30, No 6

April-June 2022

Quarterly, £5 per annum

This magazine is issued by the  
**SOVEREIGN GRACE ADVENT TESTIMONY**

(Registered Charity No. 261489)

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The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

## CONTENTS

THE TESTIMONY OF ZEPHANIAH.....	82
By Stephen A Toms	
J C PHILPOT ON THE MILLENNIUM.....	86
HAGGAI.....	87
By John Hunt Lynn	
THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.....	91
By Cecil Yates Biss	
ATONEMENT.....	94
By August Montague Toplady	
NOTICES.....	94

## The Testimony of Zephaniah

By Stephen A Toms

*(This is a summary of a message preached at the Autumn Conference of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony on 24th September, 2021. It can be downloaded from the S.G.A.T. website).*

In our series of studies on the testimony of **all** the prophets to the Second Coming of Christ, we have now, for our consideration, the prophet Zephaniah.

You will notice that at the commencement of the Book under his name, we have the phrase, ‘The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah.’ You will know that when the words, ‘LORD’ and ‘GOD’ are in capital letters in our Authorised Version, it is the name, ‘Jehovah.’ So the emphasis right at the beginning is that the prophet was speaking Jehovah’s word. That is, of course, true for the writer of every book in the Bible but it is a reminder to us that Zephaniah was not promoting his own views, ideas, or desires; but the words he spoke came to him from the God of heaven, Jehovah. We have here, and in all the other books of the Bible, the Word given by God and it is foolish for men to suggest changing the meaning of those words that God has used to reveal His purposes.

The first verse in the Book is also interesting as it provides the prophet’s genealogy back to his great-great-grandfather. No other prophet gives such information. Zechariah records the names of two previous generations but most of the prophets only give the name of their father or else no details at all of their forebears. The information supplied by Zephaniah could indicate that he came from a notable family. It was, however, considerably more important that he was chosen for a work far exceeding any earthly nobility; he was called to be a prophet – one who spoke and wrote the very words of God.

The same opening verse tells us that Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, who was, of course, the last of the good kings of Judah. There was a great reform in Josiah’s day and it is possible that this prophet’s testimony encouraged that reformation.

I ought to state emphatically that the prophecy is about the Second Coming of Christ. On reading the Book through, you will notice that the word ‘day’ appears many times – frequently ‘the day of Jehovah,’ or ‘that day,’ or ‘same day;’ and one verse refers to it as ‘the great day.’ When the Bible speaks of the Day of the Lord, it usually refers to the day of the Saviour’s Second Coming. It is not the day of Nebuchadnezzar’s conquering Jerusalem, or the day of Israel’s return from the captivity; not even the date of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, or His death or resurrection; nor any other day in history. Some of the things prophesied may have been partially fulfilled in earlier times, but pre-eminently, the Book is giving details of the day when Christ will return to this earth.

### The Summary of the Book

It is always helpful to find out what any book in the Bible is about and have a summary of the teaching. To assist that, it is a good practice to read the whole book in one sitting.

## WATCHING AND WAITING

83

This may not be so easy with some of the longer books of the Bible but there is no difficulty in reading through this short book – it only has 53 verses. For a summary of this prophecy, there is a very helpful outline of notes in last July's issue of 'Watching and Waiting.' Pastor John Hunt Lynn, who was the first chairman of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, and an Hebrew and Greek scholar, spoke on 'Zephaniah' at a meeting just over 100 years ago and his notes were subsequently printed in the magazine during 1922. These have been reproduced in the recent issue.

The first six verses deal with God's judgment upon idolatry. The word 'stumblingblocks' is mentioned in verse 3 and you will see from the margin in your Bible that this could have been rendered 'idols.' Idols are stumblingblocks! God will deal with idolatry and idolators. Mr Lynn rightly stated that the Chemarims referred to in verse 4 are the priests of idolatry, and that Malcham, in verse 5, is Molech. In this section there are such phrases as 'I will utterly consume,' 'I will also stretch out My hand;' and those statements plainly indicate God's hatred of idolatry and His coming judgment on these things.

The next few verses clearly show us that the prophet is speaking of the Day of the Lord. Mr Lynn referred to the reform in Josiah's day, as recorded in 2 Kings 23 and 24, and he used the word 'adumbrated.' That may be a word not in common use today but it simply means 'faintly represent.' It is certainly true that Josiah's reform only faintly represented what will happen at the time of the Second Coming.

There is also a quote from Henderson given in the notes – 'the strange or foreign attire of verse 8 indicates that the rich violated the ordinance regarding national costume (Numbers 15:37-40), and wore the costly and showy raiment of idolators, with whom they could thus more easily mingle.' Is that not exactly what is happening today? Professing Christians frequently want to look like the world and do what the world does so that they can mingle with the world; and the teaching of the Word of God concerning separation is totally ignored.

The last verse of the chapter is very striking and solemn. It states quite definitely that silver and gold will not be able to deliver anybody in the day of Jehovah's wrath. It is a reminder to us all that the Day of Judgment will certainly come and nothing we are or possess can make us fit to stand before the Holy God. Idols definitely will not help anyone.

Chapter 2 commences with an appeal to a 'nation not desired.' Those words of God certainly describe Israel, and through history there have been those who have found the Jews so undesirable that they have sought to completely destroy the nation – including Haman in Old Testament times down to Adolf Hitler in more recent days. To this people comes the exhortation to seek Jehovah (verse 3).

The remainder of the chapter deals with judgments upon Gentile nations round about Israel geographically. Verses 4-7 speak of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod, which are described as 'the land of the Philistines'; verses 8-11 speak of Moab and Ammon; verse 12 speaks of Ethiopians; and verses 13-15 speak of Assyria and Nineveh, which are described as being in 'the north.' It is interesting to observe that these enemies of Israel upon whom the judgment of God will fall are on all sides of the nation – the Philistines (or Palestinians) on the west; Moab and Ammon (or Jordan) on the east; Ethiopians to the south; and Assyria to 'the north.'

You will notice in verse 3 that, with all these enemies around God's ancient people, the meek of Israel are encouraged to seek Jehovah with the words spoken by the prophet, 'It may be ye shall be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger.' The name 'Zephaniah' means 'Jehovah hides,' and here the prophet speaks of their God doing that for them.

The final chapter commences with an exposure of Israel's sins, and verse 2 shows steps taken by the nation in apostasy. In this verse, the word 'not' occurs four times - 'She obeyed **not** the voice; she received **not** correction; she trusted **not** in Jehovah; and drew **not** near to her God.' Then in verses 3-4, we are told of the leadership the nation had in this apostasy. We read of her princes, judges, prophets and priests - the very people who should have been guiding the nation in the paths of truth and righteousness.

The remaining part of this last chapter contains some wonderful promises.

### The Sovereignty of the Lord

This Movement has the name, 'Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony,' so the first word in our title is 'sovereign.' That is because those who were raised up by God to start the Testimony firmly believed that prophetic truth is based on the sovereignty of God. He is sovereign and does that which He purposed. The world is not controlled by men; it is controlled by God. Mr Fromow once said to me that he liked to speak on prophetic subjects because it showed that God is doing what He has said He will do. He always acts according to His own will. There can be no doubt about that. The words 'will' and 'shall,' or similar words, are continuously repeated in this Book of Zephaniah. Friends would find it a good and rewarding exercise to read through the book to see how many times such words occur. If there are references to men doing anything, as for example in 1:13 - 'they shall build houses' - it is because the Almighty, in His predetermined counsel, has decreed that it should happen.

If we read the Bible honestly, we cannot avoid accepting the fact that God has omnipotent control over all things. Events in the world do not depend upon the president of the U.S.A. or the prime minister of Britain; not even on the popes who make such pompous claims to power. Such men cannot do anything which is not controlled by the sovereign God. He will do that which He has purposed; and the things He has said that He will do (His prophetic utterances) are those things He intends to carry out. So, he who is wise will believe prophetic statements in the Scriptures. This is a basic truth for our Testimony. Mr Payne used to say that if we abandoned our belief in the sovereignty of God, we would lose everything. 'What God has said must be fulfilled; on this strong rock, believers build; His Word shall stand, His Truth prevail, and not one jot or tittle fail.' This Book of Zephaniah gives strong evidence to the fact that God is sovereign. The men who presently exercise power in the earth will all be brought to realise their complete powerlessness when the judgment of God falls upon the world.

We held a series of meetings some years ago in which the subject of God's purposes for different nations constituted the theme. Obviously, not all nations were considered, and of those that were, it was not possible for the speakers to refer to all the relevant Scriptures; but what God has said about some of the countries which are mentioned in

Zephaniah 2 was studied and considered. These messages were subsequently printed in booklet form and are available from ourselves; and they all emphasise that God has revealed purposes, which He will most definitely and precisely fulfil.

### The Salvation of the Nation

The final section of the last chapter of Zephaniah speaks of God's future blessings for the Nation of Israel. As in the earlier chapters, there is continual reference to the Day of the Lord, so these closing verses of the book clearly refer to the time of Christ's Second Coming. In verse 8, there is a call to prayer as Jehovah instructs His people to wait for Him. He 'will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them' (Ezekiel 36:37).

In verse 9, we read of the people being turned to a pure lip, or 'language' (as given in the margin). In verses 11-12 we read, 'In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against Me; for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah.' That will be a wonderful day for the Israel nation, their transgression forgiven and their haughtiness taken away.

Then, in verse 14, there is this exhortation, 'Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.' When God says Zion, He means Zion; and when He says Israel, He means Israel; and when He says Jerusalem, He means Jerusalem. Those are the words God uses and He also refers in verse 16 to Jerusalem and Zion, and they mean precisely what they say. God knows what He has spoken, and He says what He means and He means what He says.

All these verses reveal that there is a day coming – the Day of the LORD – when Israel will be forgiven and blessed. Zechariah confirms this as he tells in chapter 12 of the time when the nation will be brought to true repentance and will mourn for sin.

Five times the words 'in the midst' are found in this third chapter. Verse 15 says, 'The King of Israel, even Jehovah is **in the midst** of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.' Jehovah will be in the midst of them.

Verse 16 says, 'In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack (*margin: faint*).' For centuries, there has been reason for anxiety in Jerusalem with the many troubles there, but when this Day of Jehovah comes, the residents of the City will have no cause to fear.

Then in verse 17, 'Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy: He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing.' Have you ever thought about God singing? We have read the previous verse where God exhorts His people to sing, and that which He tells them to do, He will Himself do. Reference to a concordance will reveal several Scriptures which speak about the singing in the millennium. People will go to Zion singing, and the nation of Israel will be singing; believers in Jerusalem will be singing. There will be great rejoicing when the Lord returns. It will be a really wonderful time. All these final verses of the book refer to the blessings of 'that day.'

How many times have you heard men preach on this verse 17 and apply it to the Church? There may be application, but that is not what the verse is saying. God is speaking of Jerusalem. The Saviour will come ‘and His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem’ (Zechariah 14:4).

Look at the last verse, ‘At that time **will I** bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for **I will** make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith Jehovah.’ You will notice that this verse specifically states ‘the earth,’ and Jehovah will make the Israel nation a praise here below. That has not yet happened. It did not occur when the people returned from the captivity in the days of Cyrus. It did not come to pass when the Saviour was here on earth; and it has not happened since. It must happen, because God has said it, and we notice again the words of sovereign power, ‘I will.’ If the promise has not yet been fulfilled, it must be prophetic – something that is yet to be.

It seems to me that those who refuse to accept the plain words of Scripture and state that this is a promise to the Church would have to admit that the Church has never been a praise among all people of the earth. Christians have been persecuted through the centuries, and still are finding things extremely hard in this hostile world.

It is not needful for us to know what a-millennialists teach but it is important that we take heed to the words of God. Every word in Zephaniah’s prophecy came to him from Jehovah and the things the Lord covenanted to do for Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel, He will fulfil.

So, Zephaniah spoke about the Second Coming of Christ, as did all the other prophets.

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## J C Philpot on the Millennium

*(The following are short excerpts from an article published in the ‘Gospel Standard’ in November, 1862. Those who appreciate Mr Philpot’s teaching may well like to consider his words of wisdom in a message on ‘The Future Extent of Christ’s Mediatorial reign’).*

We express our firm belief that this will be beyond all that has been ever witnessed, or seen, or known. To assert, as some are now asserting, that the present is the millennial dispensation, and that we are to have no other, is one of those wild, heady, unscriptural declarations which may be well expected from men who deny the true and proper Sonship of our adorable Lord. Can nothing content them but to strip Jesus of His ‘many crowns’ (Revelation 19:12)? First, they rob Him of His dearest and eternal crown – that is ‘the Son of the Father in truth and love,’ and now they will strike another from His head, and will not suffer that all nations shall call Him blessed, or the whole earth be filled with His glory.

That Christ shall reign to an extent hitherto unknown is so clearly revealed in the word of truth that, to our mind, nothing but the most obstinate unbelief or inveterate prejudice can deny it.

But we cannot pass the subject by without expressing two convictions, founded, we trust, on the word of truth, as far as it has been opened up to our spiritual understanding: (1) That the reign of Jesus will be from shore to shore; and (2) that this reign, whether personal or spiritual, will be in full accordance with every gospel doctrine, every heavenly truth, and every part of living experience. We have no idea of a carnal kingdom, or any sympathy with those who by their sensual views of Christ's future reign have done so much to prejudice the minds of God's family against it.

There will be an abundance of earthly peace and temporal prosperity in those happy days when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; when 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;' but if all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD it can be no other glory than that seen by the saints now: 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6). This must be a spiritual glory, according to the apostle's testimony: 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Corinthians 3:18).

But whilst we believe that there will be a display of the future glory of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom such as earth has never yet witnessed, but which all the prophets have foretold in their highest strains, and as with one harmonious voice, yet would we guard ourselves strictly against forecasting either the time or the manner of its accomplishment.

Have those who deny or ignore the future reign of Christ and His millennial glory ever considered this passage, 'But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD' (Numbers 14:21)? Is all the earth filled with His glory? Is there any present prospect of it? But how solemn the oath of God where He swears by His own eternal being, 'As truly as I live.' Is not God's oath one of those 'two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie' (Hebrews 6:18)? And was not this the very nature and essence of the faith and patience of Abraham, that he believed the word and oath of God, 'and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise'? Whatever faith, then, or patience such men possess, it is quite clear they have not the faith or patience of father Abraham.

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## Haggai

By John Hunt Lynn

*(These notes, compiled by the first chairman of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, were taken from Watching and Waiting, September, 1930).*

Haggai = Festival of the Lord. The burden of his witness, whether by Counsel, Statement or Prediction, is THE HOUSE whose final glory shall be greater than any precedent, when 'it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which

came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah Sabaoth, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles' (Zechariah 14:16).

The chief personality of this book is Zerubbabel. This name meaning 'sown in Babylon,' emphasises all that Judah's captivity implied. His name heads the lists of those who returned from captivity. As heir of David and head of David's house he occupied the position of governor, under Gentile lordship. To him, Cyrus delivered the vessels of the Sanctuary. He laid the foundations of the second temple. As travail eventuated in blessing (2:19), so Israel's direct and final woes will eventuate in fullness of blessing. Zerubbabel's name is typically germinal and the last Prince of the House of David is typically foreshadowed under this name in the end of Haggai's prophecy.

There are seven messages in this brief book. **1st** - To Zerubbabel the Prince Governor, and Joshua the High Priest (1:1-2). **2nd** - To the people (1:3-12). **3rd** - Divine Presence Promised (1:13-15). **4th** - To Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people (2:1-9), Interrogation and Judgment. **5th** - To the priests - Dialogue (2:10-14). **6th** - Expostulation and Promise (2:15-19). **7th** - Announcement to Zerubbabel of ULTIMATE ISSUES (2:20-23).

### **The First Message – to Zerubbabel**

Haggai and Zechariah were to prophesy, and to exhort Zerubbabel and Joshua to proceed with the work the Samaritans had hindered (Ezra 5:1). The message indicates that the delay had been charged, virtually, against the Lord: 'This people say **the time is not come.**' But they had used these years for their own comfort and aggrandisement.

This message engaged the Governor and High Priest to rectify this evil procedure, that gave the people the prime consideration, and relegated the Lord to an unknown and more convenient season.

### **The Second Message – a Rebuke**

Those who had deemed these years of neglect to have been the time for their panelled houses to be built (1:4), while God's lay waste, were rebuked, and exhorted to consider (set their heart upon) their ways (1:5-7). This rebuke associated futility of labour (verse 6) and the adverse conditions of heaven above and of the land with their unworthy conduct (verses 9-11). In verse 8 the Lord promises to take pleasure in their work of building His House, and declares He will be glorified therein notwithstanding their lacking of material. Verse 12 recites the blessed result: 'Then Zerubbabel ... and Joshua ... with all the remnant of the people, OBEYED the voice of Jehovah their God ... and the people did FEAR before JEHOVAH.'

### **The Third Message**

This message recognised the difficulties and deterrents of the penitent and obedient, emphasised that God is FOR us and all against is a negligible quantity. Verse 13: 'I am with you.' Verse 14: '... and they came and did work.'

### **The Fourth, or Central Message**

This message is within four weeks of the third. It covers the ENTIRE NATIONAL HISTORY. Verse 3 points out that the glory of the House was inferior to that of Solomon's Temple. Verse 4 repeats the great word, 'I am with you' as the

ENERGISER. Verse 5 tells the unchanging fact of the covenanted and remaining presence of the Holy Spirit, from Egypt onwards. Verses 6-9 look forward to the coming Day, when the final House, predicted also by Ezekiel, shall be the Presence Place of the City, ‘and the name of the City’ shall be ‘Jehovah Shammah.’ ‘The glory of this latter House shall be greater than the former ... in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah Sabaoth’ (margin, ‘the latter glory of This House’). Verse 9: THIS HOUSE, whether built by Solomon, Ezra or that yet to be, i.e. The House of The LORD. Immanuel called it, in the days of His flesh, ‘My Father’s House’ (John 2:16), and ‘My House’ (Matthew 21:13), quoting from Isaiah 56:7, which points on to the House yet to be built (compare Ezekiel 43:2-5, 44:4). There is unity in the Temple of God, along the ages.

### The Fifth Message – to the Priests

This is inquiring as to possibility of being holy if in contact with aught unclean while conducting the sacred ministries of the Sanctuary. They answered, ‘No.’ Haggai then declared that Jehovah saith, ‘So is this nation before Me ... and so every work of their hands’ (verse 14).

### The Sixth Message – Expostulation and Promise

Reciting the evils that had befallen them, the prophet, exactly two months after the former announcement (verse 18), calls on them to consider and, in verse 19, reminding them of the barrenness that had afflicted them, announces the reversal of their trouble, declaring the glad tidings, ‘From this day will I bless you.’

### The Seventh, or Final Message

This message of ultimate issues spans the interval from the days of Haggai to the coming era when the kingdoms of this world shall be overthrown, and shall be brought under Immanuel’s sceptre. Then Jehovah’s Sabbath, ‘Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His Habitation. This is My REST’ (Psalm 132:13-14). To the seer is at length revealed (1) Shaking of the heavens and the earth – the end of the long night (Romans 13:12). (2) Destruction of the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen. (3) Overthrow of the alien armies. (4) Establishment of the Anti-typical Zerubbabel, as the Signet of the Eternal Promiser. These four points may be further pondered.

#### (1) The Shaking of the Heavens and the Earth

In Haggai 2:6 is announced to be in ‘a little while,’ more literally, ‘yet once, within a little.’ More than five hundred years later this is repeated as still future (Hebrews 12:26). It will end the **small moment** of the hiding of His Face from sinning Israel (Isaiah 54:7-8); for then ‘the haughtiness of (*the great*) men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day ... and they shall go into the holes ... and into the caves ... for the fear of Jehovah, and for the Glory of His Majesty when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth’ (Isaiah 2:10-21).

#### (2) Destruction of the Strength of the Kingdoms

The great image, representing that strength will become like chaff of the summer

threshing floors (Daniel 2:35) and Jehovah shall be KING. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

### (3) The Overthrow of the Warriors

‘And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples ... though all the peoples of the earth be gathered together against it ... I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open My eyes upon Judah ... and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place’ (Zechariah 12:3-6).

### (4) Establishment of Anti-typical Zerubbabel

Verse 23: ‘In that day, saith Jehovah Sabaoth, will I accept thee, O Zerubbabel, My Servant ... and will SET thee as a Signet.’ Every transaction of moment was, by Orientals, attested by a Signet. The Royal Administration of our Coming King will be the Signet process of God. Jeremiah, referring to the fact that Israel’s kings ought always to have been the representatives of Jehovah, and to mark the utter miscarriage of Judah’s vile ruler, wrote, ‘As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah ... king of Judah were the Signet upon My right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence’ (Jeremiah 22:24). The Glorious Zerubbabel will be THE SIGNET UPON JEHOVAH’S RIGHT HAND NEVER TO BE PLUCKED THENCE. Of His Kingdom there shall be no end. The Signet was of very precious stone with the King’s (or owner’s) NAME engraven. If plenary authority were delegated, as e.g. Pharaoh’s to Joseph, to whom was handed the king’s signet, the bearer was deemed as THE RIGHT HAND of its owner. Thus, however presented in the Divine Oracles, Immanuel our God or Kinsman-Redeemer was at, and ministered the Right Hand of Power, and ever carried the transcendent NAME. So when Israel went on her way to the prepared place the proclamation was, ‘Behold, I send Malach before thee, to keep thee in the way ... Take ye heed of HIM and hearken unto His voice ... for MY NAME is in HIM’ (Exodus 23:20-21). So in Isaiah 63:9, ‘In all their affliction He was afflicted, and Malach, His presence saved them.’

Zerubbabel = Sown in Babylon, well illustrates that light is sown for the Righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. The night of Israel’s bondage in Babylon was the seed-plot of the day of Glory, and the blackest hour of Jacob’s trouble shall be the garden ground that ‘causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth’ (Isaiah 61:11). The harvest – the Glory that shall fill the world. So also will the name of our Prophet be fulfilled, Haggai – ‘the Festival of Jehovah,’ the jubilance of which, when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, shall be the perpetual delight of God and man.

### Conclusion

All Haggai’s messages follow in orderly sequence for instruction in the will and purpose, and the immutability of the Faithful Covenantor. So *the first* set Jehovah in His true position as First and Supreme. *The second* brought the people to obedience and the fear of the Lord. *The third* effectuated the people’s work on His House in the strength of God’s energising presence. *The fourth* revealed the future Coming of the Lord and announced the latter day glory of the House. *The fifth* indicated the uncleanness and sin of the people, which being acknowledged; in *the sixth* the Lord

announced blessing. In *the seventh* subsequent histories are then overleaped, as if the interval between the circumstances previously referred to were brief, as indeed in Jehovah's sight it is, see Isaiah 54:7-8.

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## The Gospel of the Grace of God

### 6

By Dr Cecil Yates Biss

*(Continued from page 77).*

Next in order, but not less in importance, to a right apprehension of the nature of the Atoning Work of the Lord Jesus, lies the question of its **extent**; respecting which it is needless to say that the most diverse and conflicting views have been held even among true believers. It is with regard especially to two points that these differences exist: First, whether the Atoning Work of the Redeemer was wrought with reference to sin as a **general** question, and apart from individuals; or for the expiation of sin in connection with individuals; and, secondly, as to whether the work of propitiation was effected for the sins of **all** men, equally and alike, or on behalf only of the Elect People of God. The consideration of the first point may be briefly concluded. The Bible knows nothing of sin as a general question apart from individual sinners. Sin is guilt, and guilt is incurred only by guilty breakers of the Divine Law. To 'put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' is a phrase, therefore, which can only mean to expiate the offences of **individual men** by Sacrificial Atonement. It is, however, around the second of these questions that obscurity has appeared to gather; and this has often been felt, especially by the more thoughtful and earnest. Indeed, unless the greatest care be taken to observe the harmony which exists in Scripture between its several doctrines, and to approach the interpretation of individual passages in the recognition of that harmony, such an obscurity cannot but remain. In this way, however, the difficulties which exist in the interpretation of apparently contradictory passages can be satisfactorily removed.

It is scarcely practicable within the brief scope of this enquiry to examine fully either the one or the other of the above considerations. To do the subject justice would require a volume; and if each passage bearing upon the extent of the Atonement considered separately, the limits of the present paper would be largely exceeded. At present it is only possible to consider the matter briefly; to review some of the general considerations affecting it; and to examine a few of the passages bearing on the subject, which may serve as guides to the interpretation of those left unnoticed.

which govern the interpretation of this subject, it will at once be perceived that the extent of the Atonement stands in a necessary relation to the doctrine of Election. If it be the gracious purpose of God to gather an Elect People, each one of whom is to be brought according to the counsel of the Divine will into the fold of salvation, it will naturally follow that the Atonement of the Lord Jesus, which is God's means for the blotting out of sin, must be co-extensive with the number of the Elect. For them it will have been effectuated, but for no others; for it cannot be supposed to have been effectuated for those who are never saved, and whom it is not God's purpose to save. If, therefore, Election be received by the reader as the first of the great Doctrines of Grace revealed in Scripture, he will have no difficulty in also believing that the limitation of the Atonement to the Elect is another of the Doctrines of Grace: on the other hand, if Election be rejected, the whole question as to the Atonement will fall into confusion. This confusion may be seen in the fact that there exist very frequently, in the minds of those who reject the Doctrines of Grace, essentially deficient convictions of the nature and extent of human depravity, and of the real need of the Atoning work of the Lord Jesus, as well as of its nature and extent.

It will be admitted by all whose views are truly evangelical, that the Lord Jesus is the SAVIOUR, in a full and complete sense, and not the mere HELPER, of His people. On their behalf He has done ALL that is needed to salvation – through Him grace has made a **full** provision for their need – nothing is left to man to supply. If, then, man be incapable of doing aught towards his own salvation, faith cannot be regarded as possessing any meritoriousness whatever, as though it were an independent readiness to receive Christ on the part of some, while others reject Him. But how could this be the case? Would not such readiness of necessity render such persons praiseworthy? On the contrary, the Scripture sets forth that faith is the gift of God, and not a product of the sinful soul; for if it were, man would be disposed and able by himself to 'seek God,' which, as we have seen, the Scripture declares him to be unable to do. It must, then, be the result of the work of the Spirit of God. Faith is not the **cause** of man's acceptance before God – the cause of that salvation is the fact that Atonement has been made for each of His people by their Great Surety – but it is an index of the condition of the soul that receives salvation. 'We are saved by faith, not by works,' for it is the believing soul which is in the right attitude towards God, while the unbelieving one is in the wrong attitude, whether it be seeking to effect salvation by its works, or be simply careless regarding either salvation or ruin.

If this be so, how can it be said, as is frequently said, that the Atonement has been rendered for all men, equally and alike, but is effectual only to them that believe: that all the sins of those who shall finally be lost have been cancelled by the Atoning Blood, except the single sin of unbelief, which remains, and brings down on them condemnation for its own sake alone? Were this so, how could it be true that at the last Great Day of Account the books shall be opened before the Great White Throne, and

'the dead be judged out of the things written in the books, every man according to his works'? Can sins which have been atoned for be brought up again for judgment in the Courts of God? Sin has either been atoned for and removed from the charge of each person for whom that atonement was rendered, or it has not: if Atonement has been rendered for the Elect People of God, who shall be the heirs of salvation, this will be seen to be true: if it has been rendered equally and alike for all men, then this would not be true, for in that case sin first atoned for by the Blood of the Lamb would be found in the end to be unatoned for, seeing it will be made the ground of everlasting condemnation before the Judgment Throne of God.

And could it be true that Unbelief is the only sin for which Atonement has not been made? Yet is it not frequently said that unbelief is the only damning sin? If so, on what ground is this sin ever forgiven? Can any sin be forgiven except on the ground of Atonement? To say otherwise would be virtually to assert that whereas all the other sins of a believer were blotted out by the Blood of Jesus, his unbelief was not so blotted out, but was forgiven, eventually, upon some other ground; and that in the case of the unbeliever, his condemnation ensued not on the ground of any sin except unbelief, which had not been blotted out by the Blood of Atonement.

It has been well said by an old writer, that one of three cases must inevitably be true. His words are: 'The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either – (1) ALL the sins of ALL men; or (2) ALL the sins of SOME men' or (3) SOME of the sins of ALL men. In which case it may be said – (a) that if the last case be true, ALL men have some sins to answer for, and so NONE are saved; (b) If the second case, then Christ, in their stead, suffered for ALL the sins of ALL the Elect in the whole world; and this is the truth; (c) But if the first case, why are not ALL men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, because of unbelief. I ask, is this unbelief a SIN, or is it not? If NOT, why should men be punished for it? If it BE, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for ALL their sins.' The argument thus stated appears to be clear, complete, and cogent.

By these general considerations it will be seen that the limitation of the Atonement to the Elect Family of Faith is a necessary sequence flowing from the nature of the Atonement as the one and only means by which sin can be expiated and its doom averted. More might be said, but it seems better for the present purpose to examine some passages of Scripture which may appear at first sight to conflict with this statement; premising that much of the difficulty which attends the interpretation of such passages is the outcome of the mistake which is so common that the Scriptures make no distinction between men and believing men; whereas it is the People of God who are addressed in Scripture, and not the unbelieving world.

*(To be continued)*

## Atonement

By Augustus Montague Toplady

From whence this fear and unbelief?  
Hath not the Father put to grief  
His spotless Son for me?  
And will the righteous Judge of men  
Condemn me for that debt of sin  
Which, Lord, was charged on Thee?

Complete atonement Thou hast made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whate'er Thy people owed;  
How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,  
And sprinkled with Thy Blood?

If Thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine;  
Payment God cannot twice demand –  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest!  
The merits of thy Great High Priest  
Have bought thy liberty;  
Trust in His efficacious Blood,  
Nor fear thy banishment from God,  
Since Jesus died for thee.

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**'Exposition of Hebrews' by Dr Adolph Saphir:** It would not be practicable for us to mention all the messages we have received about this book which we have recently re-published but we thought our readers may be interested to read excerpts from a couple of letters that have been sent to us.

On 11th October, a good friend in Northern Ireland wrote: 'A beautiful production it is, and SGAT has rendered a notable service to the Christian public. It was very kind

## WATCHING AND WAITING

95

of you to present me with this volume, beautifully bound, a book with a good font size, and readable style, on the best of subjects – Christ crucified, risen, exalted, and coming again – a very important part of Dr Saphir's literary repertoire. Thank you indeed. I consulted it frequently in the early days of my ministry, and studied some other volumes from Dr Saphir's pen, whenever I could obtain them. I shall look forward to reading 'Hebrews' again. My heartfelt thanks to you and the brethren.'

On 11th November, a good friend in Scotland wrote: 'I have just finished the book by Adolph Saphir. It has been a great blessing to read as a book rather than just to use for reference. He has covered so many subjects and still be true to the text of Scripture. He has been extremely suggestive and helpful on a multitude of truths. I used to say that every Christian should read 'Pilgrim's Progress' at least once. I believe that the same should be said about this volume. I also found the balance of theology and practical application just about right. I do thank you for this precious book. I will certainly use it in the future.'

It is not too late for YOU to purchase a copy!

**S.G.A.T. Meetings:** Arrangements have been made, God willing, for meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony to continue through 2022, with the theme '**Where are we in God's Calendar?**' We trust that friends are interested in the subjects, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which we hope to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.p.m. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.p.m. Details of the meetings for this Quarter are given on the back page but so that you can insert the dates for the remainder of the meetings in your diary and arrange to be present, we give particulars which are as follows, subject to the will of the Lord:

July 22 .....Will the Church go through the Great Tribulation? ..... *Ivan Foster*  
September 23

(Aft) .....When will the Seven Plagues be poured upon the Earth?...*Ivan Foster*  
(Even) .....When will the City of Babylon be Rebuilt? ..... *Martin Humphrey*  
October 28 .....Will there be a Battle of Armageddon? ..... *David McMillan*  
November 25 ....When will there be Peace in Jerusalem? ..... *Richard Momteith*

**If Government restrictions continue due to the virus, so that we cannot hold our meetings in London, the services can be heard on line at the same time as announced (i.e. British time, either GMT or BST) by using one of the following links:**

<http://sermonaudio.com/sgat>

<http://facebook.com/sgat>

<http://youtube.com/channel/UC8fFgLBzrc8GuSzcmOC5vmA?>